

IASC PEER-2-PEER PROJECT	SOUTH SUDAN
MISSION REPORT	
MISSION DATES : 27 FEBRUARY - 12 MARCH 2022	ISSUANCE DATE: 11/04/2022

ANNEXES:

1. HCT action plan
2. Note on Integrated Office
3. Note on Risk Management Unit
4. List of statements for survey
5. Regional and national self-assessment survey results
6. Mission program

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Peer-2-Peer (P2P) team wishes to acknowledge the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms. Sara Beysolow Nyanti, for her leadership of the humanitarian efforts in the complex and challenging environment of South Sudan and for her initiative in seeking a P2P support mission to strengthen the humanitarian response. The P2P team also wishes to acknowledge the cooperation and contribution of the entire Humanitarian Country Team and other partners in South Sudan in conducting this review.

MISSION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Objectives: The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) invited the P2P project to carry out a support mission in South Sudan aimed at helping inform and shape optimized mechanisms, strategies and operational approaches for the current and evolving context, identifying ways to strengthen the overall humanitarian response. The Terms of Reference (ToR) highlighted the following key issues: 1) Humanitarian leadership and coordination; 2) Linkage

opportunities; 3) Standards and response quality, including the IASC's four non-negotiables, as well as Grand Bargain commitments, especially as pertain to localization and participation; and 4) Potential course correctors and/ or collective approaches to context constraints.

Methodology: During the preparation phase of the P2P mission, members of the team held calls with heads of agencies, the ICRC Head of Mission, and the HC to facilitate preliminary discussions around the scope and objectives of the mission. The ToR was circulated among Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) members for their feedback and endorsement. The IASC Emergency Directors Group (EDG) subsequently nominated mission team members. The mission team followed a bottom-up, participative methodology based on consultations and self-diagnosis of key challenges and possible solutions, engaging with humanitarian actors through a series of workshops at national and sub-national levels. The team also held group and bilateral meetings with a diverse set of actors, including Vice-President Rebecca Nyandeng Garang de Mabior, individual ministers and state governors, representatives of the South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC), populations affected by the humanitarian crisis, including women, youth and community leaders, international and national NGOs, development partners, the World Bank, donors, researchers, and others (for full list of meetings, see Annex 6).

The mission team held ten dedicated participatory sessions¹ in Juba, Bentiu, Bor, Malakal and Wau. These workshops allowed participants to reflect on challenges and constraints, and identify measures and actions to overcome them. Groups undertook a prioritization exercise, not only agreeing on the most urgent matters, but also building team spirit and consensus through collective solutions.

At the end of the mission, the team organized a full-day HCT retreat to reflect on and validate the findings of the mission, agree on priority challenges and ways to address them. Retreat participants engaged through participatory activities, including a survey and small-group and collective identification of actions to strengthen the response in support of review findings. The outcomes of the retreat in turn provided the agreed basis for the Action Plan (see annex 1) that the HC and HCT have committed to implement. The mission report reflects the findings and recommendations by the P2P support mission team, outcomes of discussions and workshops, including the HC retreat.

The mission team was deeply impressed and encouraged by the strong desire for change across all interlocutors in the humanitarian operation. There is a recognition of the need to do things differently, and indeed there are already efforts underway to do so. The mission hopes that this report reflects those efforts and contributes to new thinking.

¹ HCT and national ICCG in Juba; ICCG and INGOs/NNGOs in Bentiu, Bor, Malakal and Wau, respectively.

Mission team:²

Peter de Clercq, Peer-2-Peer Mission Team Leader

Allan Calma, Global Humanitarian Coordinator, Lutheran World Federation

Sarah Fuhrman, Senior Manager of Humanitarian Policy and Advocacy, CARE

Fahim Khan, Head of Programmes, Foundation for Rural Development, Pakistan

Brian Lander, Deputy Director of Emergencies, WFP

Stephen O'Malley, Director, IASC Peer-2-Peer Support Project (P2P)

Trude Strand, Senior Project Manager Inter-Agency ProCap and GenCap, OCHA Geneva

Anders Thomsen, Country Representative, UNFPA Somalia

All members of the team participated in the mission as independent representatives of the IASC, and not as representatives of their agency or NGO. The mission was also supported throughout by an additional staff member from the P2P Project and a staff member of the OCHA South Sudan Country Office.

CONTEXT

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in South Sudan estimates that 8.9 million people will require life-saving and humanitarian assistance and protection in 2022. This represents 74 per cent of the population and an increase of 600,000 people as compared to 2021. More than two-thirds of people in need are in the severe, extreme, or catastrophic categories of the severity scale. According to gender, age, and disability disaggregated data, more than half of people in need are children.

Deepening and increased needs are due to conflict and violence; new, repeated and protracted displacement; high poverty rates and loss of livelihoods, arable lands and crops; pervasive food insecurity; lack of access to basic services including health care, water and sanitation; exhausted coping strategies and climatic shocks such as floods and drought. In 2021, there were 2 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in South Sudan, an increase of 300,000 from 2020. Underlying vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by unmet needs, whether as a result of re-programming (e.g., floods response), a reduction of resources, or lack of access due to insecurity and other factors. It is estimated that about 8.3 million people will face extreme hunger as the 2022 lean season sets in.

The humanitarian situation in South Sudan continues to evolve within the context of localized violence. The lack of peace constitutes the major impediment to development, and any reduction in the reliance on humanitarian

² One member of the team participated in the first week of the mission only due to the unfolding humanitarian situation in Ukraine and associated response needs within the member's organization.

assistance. Local-level conflict, much of which is linked to national politics, harms civilians, increases displacement, impedes return, and disrupts humanitarian assistance activities. In the view of some participants, humanitarian space continues to shrink in conflict-affected areas. In his briefing to the Security Council on 7 March, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Nicholas Haysom, noted the slow progress towards the implementation of the revised peace agreement, and the challenges that still face the consolidation of peace in South Sudan.

The overall protection environment is characterized by impunity, lack of access to justice, high levels of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), and an education and child protection crisis, as reflected by increased levels of exploitation, forced recruitment, and child marriage. In 2019, South Sudan was ranked 185 out of 189 countries and territories rated through the Human Development Index.

South Sudan is highly vulnerable to climate shocks, as evidenced by recent flooding, droughts, and locust infestation. Climate events are direct drivers of displacement and communal tensions and conflict. Moreover, as 95 per cent of livelihoods depend on traditional rain-fed agriculture, crop farming, pastoralism and animal husbandry, the direct impact on subsistence, resilience and coping strategies is devastating. Women, and especially female-headed households, are particularly vulnerable as they traditionally rely on small-scale agriculture and carry responsibilities related to collection of potable water and firewood.

The mobility of people is severely constrained, whether due to lack of roads, increasing seasonal flooding, or for fear of attacks and violence. This severely undermines the capacity to sustain livelihood activities in many areas, as well as the development of markets. Farming and other traditional means of achieving some level of self-reliance and resilience are undermined by a pervasive environment of insecurity, uncertainty and fear.

Through long-term and large-scale humanitarian operations, the response in South Sudan is not only filling gaps but is at a more fundamental level substituting for basic state roles and responsibilities. The P2P mission observed that basic services and other major state responsibilities related to social protection have effectively been outsourced to the international community.

South Sudan's economic outlook is quite positive. State oil revenues are expected to grow in line with global price trends. There is little confidence that this increased fiscal space will result in a reduction in dependence on external humanitarian aid in the short to medium term. Conditions are unlikely to improve significantly, unless humanitarian programs are coupled with stability, government investment in basic services, enhanced accountability, access to justice and the rule of law, and resilience and development activities at adequate scale.

However, as the humanitarian operation in South Sudan enters its fifth decade, there are opportunities to build resilience and go beyond humanitarian action. These positive opportunities exist at the same time as humanitarian needs are growing. The mission heard efforts to categorize the situation as a humanitarian crisis or as a development opportunity. It is fundamentally important to avoid futile binary thinking that caricatures reality – it is not air drops vs seeds and tools, or a simplistic and immediate pivot from humanitarian to development assistance – both realities coexist. Further, the variation in conditions and contexts at the state and county levels demands a much more granular understanding of peoples’ needs and more context-specific approaches.

The funding environment for both humanitarian and development spending is not auspicious. Unfortunately, donor funding for humanitarian action in South Sudan was already expected to fall in 2022, even before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and will not be sufficient to meet needs. The focus must be on those most in need and those in the most difficult areas – to “leave no one behind.” Given the scale of the needs, it will continue to be impossible to meet all needs or respond to every emergency. On the development side, there is distrust between the government and donors, and many donors are unwilling to channel money directly through government structures. However, some UN agencies are undertaking small-scale experiments with national execution, and the World Bank and the Africa Development Bank are already channeling some funding directly to government. These efforts will provide important data for future action and may point to the need to increase risk appetite. There is unanimity that not addressing the lack of government ownership and accountability is untenable.

The prospect of national elections was universally viewed as the most important cause of uncertainty in the next one to three years. If not well-managed, the run-up to elections could exacerbate local conflicts, and increase vulnerability. Discreet contingency planning with the appropriate inclusion of national counterparts should be undertaken.

MISSION FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDING #1: TURNING THE OIL TANKER – JOINT ANALYSIS/JOINT APPROACHES

Humanitarian needs in South Sudan remain extremely high. Nonetheless, there are opportunities for humanitarian actors to take with peace and development actors to support peace and begin moving beyond humanitarian assistance. This can be done through a higher risk appetite backed by strong context and risk analysis done jointly with peace and development partners, the creation of an Integrated Office to support the DSRSG/RC/HC, and more sustained advocacy with government on its responsibilities and with donors for more flexible and longer-term funding.

A much stronger joint approach to context analysis, programmatic risk assessment, and risk management measures is required to manage risk appropriately and create more coherent programming. This will support the development of a common narrative across the humanitarian and development community.

To optimize her role as the main enabler of the “nexus” approach, **the DSRSG/RC/HC requires the support of a fit-for-purpose Integrated Office, led by a D1**, akin to those found in other similar situations, where a coherent management approach can be fostered with a stronger focus on leveraging the triple nexus. The Office should include a joint risk management unit, similar to those in Somalia and Afghanistan. This unit can draw on individual agency resources, as well as those of UNMISS, UNDP and the international financial institutions.

A more joined-up approach to analysis and risk management is required. While significant efforts have been made to improve joint needs assessments, the HCT does not have a common framework for analyzing contexts, assessing overall program risk in certain areas or the risk of working with specific partners. Individual humanitarian, peace and development actors continue to act in an isolated manner; agency-specific analysis is not always well shared or communicated, and the different approaches are contributing to distrust rather than shared understanding and common responses.

The HCT can make better use of existing analytical resources. There is an excellent cadre of UN and NGO context analysts who can inform a more systematic approach to risk analysis and management. A common analytical framework for HCT decision-making will avoid the risk that each agency/NGO makes its own context and assessments, and will lessen the chance of HCT fragmentation and competition for scarce resources.

Examples of higher risk interventions would include targeted support in areas where communities are expressing a willingness to enhance coexistence, or where there are spontaneous IDP and refugee returns. Humanitarian actors need to be agile and flexible to jointly identify and exploit opportunities. Similarly, donors will need to exercise maximum flexibility. It also needs to be recognized that significant lifesaving programs will

remain a necessity and that resources cannot simply be transferred from humanitarian activities to the addressing of underlying causes.

The Reconciliation, Stabilization and Resilience Trust Fund (RSRTF), which is currently programming more than \$50 million, was frequently cited as a positive example of an area-based approach, drawing together UNMISS, UN agencies and NGOs to address specific challenges in specific areas. While still at a relatively early phase, the RSRTF offers some encouraging signs for nexus work in highly unstable areas. The HCT's decision to prepare a two-year Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) can also be an enabling instrument.

Coordination structures should be reviewed for simplicity and inclusivity. The mission found that the same humanitarian, peace and development actors are already multi-tasking between different meetings, putting into question the need for compartmentalization. This could be avoided by minimizing the number of coordination structures. The new UNSDCF should also present an opportunity for more joint programming and could unlock additional resources (through linkages with thus far relatively underutilized themes like climate change, urbanization and community violence reduction. Development actors are still largely absent, particularly at sub-national levels where they are most required to help “changing the course of the oil tanker.” Development actors could play a stronger and more visible role in the HCT and perform a catalytic role towards prevention and solutions to long-standing and cyclical humanitarian crises. Potentially, a local governance platform could be introduced through a stronger participation of development actors, which would enhance cooperation with and ownership by national and, in particular, sub-national actors and authorities.

There are opportunities to enhance collaboration with UNMISS. In Juba and the field, collaboration with UNMISS was generally reported as good, with evidence of quite strong ties in some areas. MCDA arrangements with the mission function well, and prioritized requests through the system were being appropriately considered. As mentioned earlier, there are opportunities to draw on the analytical capacities of UNMISS to support better risk management. Moreover, a more strategic and pro-active relationship with sub-national authorities by humanitarian actors could draw on relations already established by UNMISS.

Relations with government and civil society

The humanitarian community's current relationship with the government of South Sudan at the national and subnational levels is one of “outsourced responsibilities” (for the delivery of life saving basic services) and “outsourced accountability.” The authorities at all levels showed every expectation that this current reality will be maintained. It allows them to point elsewhere for the alleviation of needs, the pursuit of solutions or a fulfillment of the social contract. There appears to be little dialogue to change these roles, particularly at the state level.

There is a shared sense that humanitarians have fed into and helped maintain this narrative. Expectations from the population towards State Institutions are virtually non-existent. While many state governments have begun generating revenues, for example through the collection of the Personal Income Tax, there is no evidence that these resources are invested in social services and public investment. The authorities are fully aware that, in spite of the rhetoric of some critical donors, humanitarian actors will always be ready to intervene in times of crisis, and no conditionalities will be placed on life-saving assistance.

Many interlocuters expressed serious doubts about government willingness/capacity to enhance their role in basic service delivery, but there are increasingly institutions (both at central and State level) where actions are happening. It appeared evident that development-oriented local governance would have the potential to ensure more effective delivery of both assistance and solutions, as has been demonstrated in other contexts. UN agencies are experimenting with putting money into line ministries for national execution, for example, UNICEF's work with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, and FAO's work with the Ministry of Agriculture. These initiatives will inform thinking about future options for more traditional development cooperation. As well, UNDP and others have supported the formulation of the National Development Plan and an aligned budgeting process, and there is a high-level Public Financial Management group encompassing donors and government. These efforts are not without their challenges, but again they have the potential to provide platforms for future collaboration. There is the need to be clear-eyed about the time and effort needed to transition to fuller government ownership and adopt an incentive-based approach in this respect. Multiple conversations confirmed that technical staff typically remain with a ministry for longer periods, allowing actors along the nexus to build relationships and improve technical knowledge and accountability.

Cooperation between and across ministries is generally weak; however, UN agencies also need to strengthen their alignment when dealing with individual line ministries. The mission was given examples where the uncoordinated approaches of UN agencies heighten the risk that they are played against one another.

The mission found clear evidence of increased civil society engagement and sees opportunities to reinforce civil society's role in formulating their own solutions and aspirations. At the same time, the political and security environment in South Sudan remains challenging for a stronger role by civil society. Empowering and enhancing the role of civil society need to be undertaken in a way that does not simply transfer risks to them. The international community has an evident "duty of care" role in this respect.

The challenges and opportunities associated with youth were raised in every location visited by the mission. Youth represent more than 70 per cent of the South Sudanese population and are facing major obstacles in entering the workforce and participating in civic life. In many places, their education has been disrupted since

2013. They feel marginalized from technical jobs taken by non-South Sudanese workers. Youth have been involved in many of the protests against NGO hiring practices. Youth are often instrumentalized by political actors and are well aware of this reality. In one location, they referred to themselves as “firewood” for political conflagrations. Youth is one of the four themes in the new UNSDCF, and there is a UN strategy and a national youth strategy in development, but youth will need to have concrete and tangible opportunities. Reframing the relationship with them is critical. Youth should be treated as a potential “force for good” rather than a primary threat. Additional resources may be available for youth programs by using the “prevention of violence extremism” and “community violence reduction” angles.

Addressing violence against aid workers and bureaucratic and administrative impediments (BAI) is a central pillar in the humanitarian community’s engagement with government and other actors at all levels. There are good examples of collective HCT advocacy on violence against aid workers and BAI, such as the action on the Pibor youth issues earlier this year was cited as a good example. There is no indication that the risks of violence against aid workers or the challenges of BAI are declining, so maintaining a strong and united HCT reaction will continue to be important.

HCT Recommendations:

Undertake a vision exercise, building on the UNSDCF and the two-year HRP, to articulate humanitarian response in the longer term, including exit strategies

Formally create an Integrated Office for the DSRSG/RC/HC, and secure funding and recruitment of Head of Integrated Office (D-1 level) to support coordination of triple-hat responsibilities and enable operationalization of nexus

Establish Risk Management Unit in the Integrated Office of the DSRSG/RC/HC to ensure a collective platform for analysis at national, state and area-levels, including any emerging “hotspots”

Ensure outputs of Risk Management Unit is made available to partners for improved risk-informed programming and collective approaches to engagement and discussions with GoSS

Conduct national preparedness planning exercise identifying risks, opportunities, preparedness measures and engagement strategy, starting with elections and floods, with an emphasis on the sub-national level

Finalize actionable short to medium term triple nexus strategy, including GoSS engagement strategy

Use the RSRTF to support practical implementation of joint humanitarian-development-peace nexus programs

Integrate resilience programming (including Disaster Risk Reduction) for more durable and sustainable local response in line with ongoing HRP process and UN agency country programme document development

Review durable solutions architecture with accountability elevated to the RC/HC around an integrated approach to displacement

Establish data sharing dialogue between UNDP and humanitarian partners (members of IM WG)

In collaboration with GoSS and development partners, develop strategies and proposals to integrate climate into programming and to access vertical funds, ensuring such proposals reinforce resilience building

FINDING #2: A NEW APPROACH TO LOCALIZATION

One decade into independence, the humanitarian community’s “capacity building” efforts for national NGOs have had inadequate results, and international humanitarian actors have not empowered national NGOs in any consistent way. A new approach to localization and partnership is required.

While donors, international NGOs, and UN agencies frequently spoke about capacity building for national NGOs, they are unclear about what type of capacity is needed. **National NGOs, particularly women-led organizations, voiced strong feelings about the lack of real inclusion in decision-making structures.** There is a massive gap in perception about the nature and quality of the cooperation between national NGOs and international actors (whether they are national or international staff). International actors think the relationship with local actors is adequate, whereas many national NGOs characterize it as extractive or transactional.

There is no common understanding of “localization” in South Sudan. It is often reduced to discussions around fluctuations in the share of funding to national NGOs through the South Sudan Humanitarian Fund (SSHF). This focus on financing has been exacerbated in the last few years by the increased use of consortiums involving international and national NGOs by the SSHF and some donors in an effort to promote more multi-cluster approaches. So far, reviews on consortium are mixed, with some national NGOs stating that they are only brought into consortiums at the end of the proposal development process, while others expressed more satisfaction with their experiences.

Several steps could be taken to put this relationship on a better trajectory:

First, there is a need for a common definition of localization in the South Sudan context. The South Sudan NGO Forum could play a leading role in working with national NGOs and South Sudanese staff members of UN agencies and INGOs to define a localization vision or policy position.

Second, the humanitarian community in South Sudan needs to develop and adopt a new partnership model. This will require a joint effort by the NGO Forum, WFP/UNICEF/UNHCR (as the largest partners to national NGOs) and others, including INGOs, to take a consistent, harmonized and targeted approach to providing similar mentorship, accompaniment, and other support over several years. The focus needs to go beyond how national NGOs can be better implementing partners to how national NGOs can be sustainable independent actors. Localization should not just be a transfer of risk to national actors to work in areas where internationals consider the situation below minimal security standard. A new partnership model should incorporate “ground rules” for effective consortium to ensure that best practices are consistently applied. A joint project to enable this effort would be useful. This could also include the introduction of a “localization marker” in programs, which would aim at national entities increasing their role in direct implementation and receipt of international funding beyond the SSHF.

Third, donors should review whether there are opportunities to create funding streams with less stringent requirements for national NGOs as a complement to the SSHF.

HCT Recommendations:

Develop South Sudan localization vision, strategy and associated targets and timelines

In line with programming objectives, advocate for more line ministry/ GoSS presence and involvement at state and county level with regard to all stages of the HPC

Use work by development and dual mandate agencies on budget and expenditure to hold GoSS actors accountable as first line of response

Establish new framework for partnership between UN agencies, INGOs and NNGOs

In line with risk analysis, strengthen local governance structures through capacity building, when and where possible

Develop consolidated capacity building programs in conjunction with and to support national and local NGOs

Support the establishment of inclusive local community structures, especially youth and women

Develop an HCT strategy for engagement with GoSS at national and state levels

FINDING #3: REVAMP AND DECENTRALIZE COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP

The present humanitarian coordination structures are still too centralized with significant resources locked up in Juba, disconnected from field realities and the important differences between states. Responsibility needs to be decentralized to the state level. The relationship between Juba and the field needs to be reset.

There is a shared recognition that the HCT is too process-oriented and largely functioning as a platform for tactical discussion of ongoing humanitarian operations. The humanitarian response was characterized as largely reactive and operation, rather than proactive and strategic. Issues with the quality and scale of the response were consistently raised. Needs assessments were the most consistently cited example of positive coordination. There was universal agreement that the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) is better this year than in the past due to more comprehensive efforts (FSNMS+). At the same time, there was frustration that the higher level of need identified through the HNO will not be reflected in the funding ask.

While the national government is highly centralized, the overconcentration in Juba by the UN and the NGOs only serves to reinforces this logic. More senior staff should be based in the field. For the UN, this can be incentivized by the elimination of danger pay in Juba (currently \$1,645 per international staff member per month), while continuing to pay it at sub-national level, where its justification remains clear.

Humanitarian colleagues consistently raised the weak or even broken linkages between the Juba-based ICCG and state-level ICCGs. Both Juba and state-based actors reported centralized decision-making and poor information-sharing. Some of the challenges may result from reduced cluster funding (the logistics cluster was cited as one example). Another cause may be the lack of stand-alone cluster coordinators at the state level – almost everyone with cluster responsibilities that the team met in the field was double-hatting with agency/NGO responsibilities. Whatever the cause, state-level clusters feel they do not get adequate attention and support from Juba. This was particularly strong in Bentiu, where participants stated that they had received inadequate support from Juba to respond to the serious flooding that has been ongoing since August 2021. Improving the preparedness and response to the flooding needs immediate action.

The upcoming Global Cluster Coordination Group mission needs to look carefully at cluster performance and accountability, and at the groups associated with the ICCG (Operational Working Group, Needs Assessment Working Group). In addition, the mission should ensure that the cluster leadership responsibilities are appropriately divided between the cluster co-coordinators, and that cluster coordinators are “firewalled” from the Cluster Lead Agency (the Protection Cluster was cited several times in this regard).

There is considerable disagreement at both Juba and field levels about the quality and utility of state-level contingency plans. The mission did not have time to review the documents, but there was general agreement that costing these plans would be essential.

State-level coordination needs to be reinvigorated and re-shaped for the future. At present there is a level of satisfaction among humanitarian actors at the state level that is based on cooperation, mutual support and comfort with tactical coordination, and a belief that more funding or additional coordination support would result in significant improvement in the response. However, there is little evidence from consultations at the state level of strategic joint analysis, joint programming and collaboration, or in imagining other approaches. The HCT will need to look at new leadership and coordination models at the state level to ensure a more strategic and connected approach. This could include experimenting with area-based coordination models where a capable and willing senior colleague from a UN agency or NGO is given a clear leadership role. This could be tried in three states initially. Strong coordination with UNMISS at State level should also be part of the “regionalization” in operational emphasis.

The new UNSDCF and the new “collective outcomes” present an opportunity to move beyond coordination into joint programming at the state level. However, this opportunity is being missed at the state level, where each UN agency is working alone to create its Country Program Document.

Most participants believed there are opportunities to expand cash programs, even where markets are quite nascent. WFP is already doing \$60 million in cash programming. Cash assistance could be coupled with other interventions, such as the introduction of Village Savings and Loan Associations, to help communities build savings and start microbusinesses.

Finally, the approach to durable solutions to displacement needs to be reviewed. Refugee returns have been essentially stable since the September 2018 signing of the Revised Peace Agreement, save for a recent spike at the end of 2021. It will be important to see if this increase in returns is sustained. At the same time, the number of internally displaced persons has risen to more than two million. The mission heard conflicting views on the possibilities and likelihood of spontaneous return, and heard some expressions of concern about possibilities for population movements driven by political considerations in the run-up to elections. It will be important to have a unified, area-based approach to planning and durable solutions under the RC/HC. A compartmentalized approach between refugee and IDP solutions should be avoided. A more integrated, collective and development driven approach to solutions should be area-based and revolve around a common assessment on risks and opportunities. There is currently an overemphasis on returns, whilst other themes such as disaster risk reduction, resilience, urbanization and a more specific focus on livelihoods (from rural to urban) should receive equal

attention. The Secretary-General’s High Level Panel Report on Internal Displacement (issued on 29 September 2021) provides clear guidance for a new and collective approach on displacement solutions.

HCT Recommendations

Conduct review of HCT composition against IASC ToR and global best practices within the context of broader review of coordination structures

Undertake review of the functioning of the ICCG in Juba and its subsidiary bodies with a view to optimize operations for stronger field support

Task the Global Cluster Coordination Group mission team with thoroughly reviewing cluster performance and accountability arrangements

Identify steps to empower sub-national humanitarian leadership, including through ensuring resourcing for minimum staffing levels to fully operationalize clusters at sub-national level

Revise ToR for national and sub-national ICCGs to ensure they are in line with decentralization and devolution objectives

Accelerate development of tailored area-based joint programming based on common risk analysis at state level

FINDING #4: ENHANCE FOCUS ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

The concept of Centrality of Protection is not well understood or mainstreamed. There are insufficient resources to address the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP). It is critical to put protection issues front and center in the HCT’s work, and improve resourcing for PSEA, GBV and AAP.

South Sudan is frequently described as a “protection crisis.” The lack of accountability and a culture of impunity characterize the relationship between state and citizen in South Sudan. In a broader context, this links to the lack of national ownership, the need for a new constitution, and lack of accountability and transparency for budgets and expenditure – in short, the lack of a social compact.

The application of the concept of Centrality of Protection is very weak, particularly outside Juba. Even with probing, protection issues did not surface in discussions with humanitarian actors, beyond Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). In Juba, Protection issues reportedly are not consistently on the HCT agenda.

The team also received some information about challenges in the Protection Cluster. These should be reviewed as part of the GCCG mission and a stand-alone review.

Gender equity is well-established in the humanitarian narrative but largely absent in practice, a noticeable omission and one with practical consequences. The discussion of gender within the last HRP was primarily oriented around GBV and SEA. These are important topics, but the focus on them evidences a lack of nuance in understanding how the overlapping crises have differently affected different groups of people.

The mission team's meeting with the PSEA co-chairs revealed a paucity of support for PSEA – one P4 post is budgeted in the RC's office, and for one year only – and a serious mismatch between UN-wide expectations and capacities in South Sudan. For example, there is no capacity to follow-up on rumors and determine whether they warrant further investigation. The necessary formal structures are in place but not the capacity to fully operate them. The UNMISS Conduct and Discipline Unit have offered to support where possible. It may also be possible to use stronger links with the Protection Cluster to strengthen prevention activities.

Accountability to affected people was consistently highlighted as a weakness. While affected people tended to be heard during initial phases of the HPC, especially during needs assessments, there was a fundamental lack of established and meaningful feedback loops at central or sub-national levels. The HCT has a strategy and work plan for collective approaches to AAP, but it is still in its early stages. Full understanding at all levels of the response, and more optimized operationalization of accountability mechanisms, will give humanitarians crucial information about their work, as well as reveal opportunities to adjust to shifting and differentiated needs.

HCT Recommendations

Request a review of the functioning of Protection Cluster

Include protection as a standing item at HCT and state level ICCG meetings to ensure collective coherence and ownership

Revise HCT Protection Strategy to identify priorities and desired protection outcomes

Strengthen Communities of Practice through enhanced protection analysis and more effective information sharing

Dedicate capacity to work with state-level ICCGs to strengthen CoP programming strategies and approaches

Accelerate implementation of collective approach to AAP through the HCT strategy on AAP

Engage communities in operation and maintenance for basic infrastructure projects

Strengthen and monitor community-based participatory planning approaches

Ensure GBV mainstreaming is reflected in programme design and implementation with adequate consideration given to risks and mitigation measures, including in WASH and food security

Invest in operationalizing GBV mitigation measures and referrals

Raise GoSS awareness and sensitization on PSEA

Pursue cost-sharing arrangements to secure adequate inter-agency PSEA staffing capacity, including on reporting.

ANNEX 1: SOUTH SUDAN HCT ACTION PLAN

#1	TURNING THE OIL TANKER: JOINT ANALYSIS/JOINT APPROACHES	Focal point/lead	By when	Status	Comments
1.	Undertake vision exercise, building on the UNSDCF and the two-year HRP, to articulate humanitarian response in the longer term, including exit strategies				
2.	Formally create an Integrated Office for the DSRSG/RC/HC, and secure funding and recruitment of Head of Integrated Office (D-1 level) to support coordination of triple-hat responsibilities and enable operationalization of nexus				
3.	Establish Risk Management Unit in the Integrated Office of the DSRSG/RC/HC to ensure a collective platform for analysis at national, state and area-levels, including any emerging “hotspots”				
4.	Ensure outputs of Risk Management Unit is made available to partners for improved risk-informed programming and collective approaches to engagement and discussions with GoSS				
5.	Conduct national preparedness planning exercise identifying risks, opportunities, preparedness measures and engagement strategy, starting with elections and floods, with an emphasis on the sub-national level				
6.	Finalize actionable short to medium term triple nexus strategy, including GoSS engagement strategy				
7.	Use the RSRTF to support practical implementation of joint humanitarian-development-peace nexus programs				
8.	Integrate resilience programming (including Disaster Risk Reduction) for more durable and sustainable local response in line with ongoing HRP process and UN agency country programme document development				
9.	Review durable solutions architecture with accountability elevated to the RC/HC around an integrated approach to displacement				
10.	Establish data sharing dialogue between UNDP and humanitarian partners (members of IM WG)				
11.	In collaboration with GoSS and development partners, develop strategies and proposals to integrate climate into programming and to access vertical funds, ensuring such proposals reinforce resilience building				
# 2	A NEW APPROACH TO LOCALIZATION	Focal point/lead	By when	Status	Comments
12.	Develop South Sudan localization vision, strategy and associated targets and timelines				

13.	In line with programming objectives, advocate for more line ministry/ GoSS presence and involvement at state and county level with regard to all stages of the HPC				
14.	Use work by development and dual mandate agencies on budget and expenditure to hold GoSS actors accountable as first line of response				
15.	Establish new framework for partnership between UN agencies, INGOs and NNGOs				
16.	In line with risk analysis, strengthen local governance structures through capacity building, when and where possible				
17.	Pursue cost-sharing arrangements to secure adequate inter-agency PSEA staffing capacity, including on reporting.				
18.	Support the establishment of inclusive local community structures, especially youth and women				
19.	Develop an HCT strategy for engagement with GoSS at national and state levels				
# 3	REVAMP AND DECENTRALIZE COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP	Focal point/lead	By when	Status	Comments
20.	Conduct review of HCT composition against IASC ToR and global best practices within the context of broader review of coordination structures				
21.	Undertake review of the functioning of the ICCG in Juba and its subsidiary bodies with a view to optimize operations for stronger field support				
22.	Task the Global Cluster Coordination Group mission team with thoroughly reviewing cluster performance and accountability arrangements				
23.	Identify steps to empower sub-national humanitarian leadership, including through ensuring resourcing for minimum staffing levels to fully operationalize clusters at sub-national level				
24.	Revise ToR for national and sub-national ICCGs to ensure they are in line with decentralization and devolution objectives				
25.	Accelerate development of tailored area-based joint programming based on common risk analysis at state level				
# 4	ENHANCE FOCUS ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS	Focal point/lead	By when	Status	Comments
26.	Request a review of the functioning of Protection Cluster				
27.	Include protection as a standing item at HCT and state level ICCG meetings to ensure collective coherence and ownership				

28.	Revise HCT Protection Strategy to identify priorities and desired protection outcomes				
29.	Strengthen Communities of Practice through enhanced protection analysis and more effective information sharing				
30.	Dedicate capacity to work with state-level ICCGs to strengthen CoP programming strategies and approaches				
31.	Accelerate implementation of collective approach to AAP through the HCT strategy on AAP				
32.	Engage communities in operation and maintenance for basic infrastructure projects				
33.	Strengthen and monitor community-based participatory planning approaches				
34.	Ensure GBV mainstreaming is reflected in programme design and implementation with adequate consideration given to risks and mitigation measures, including in WASH and food security				
35.	Invest in operationalizing GBV mitigation measures and referrals				
36.	Raise GoSS awareness and sensitization on PSEA				
37.	Pursue cost-sharing arrangements to secure adequate inter-agency PSEA staffing capacity, including on reporting.				

NB: Action plan to be finalized by HCT

ANNEX 2: NOTE ON INTEGRATED OFFICE

The mission, based on its own findings and in consultation with the HC would strongly recommend that an “Integrated Office” be set up, along the lines existing in other countries (e.g., Somalia and Afghanistan), bringing the Resident Coordinator’s, Humanitarian Coordinator’s and DSRSG’s Office under one management structure, led by one “Head of Office” (D1 level).

An Integrated Office (IO) would create synergies and mutual reinforcement between the different areas of substantive work and authority of the triple hat. It would moreover ensure that her Office (which comprises staff from all three components) remains consistent in its approaches and output. Whereas the Humanitarian Coordinator, where necessary and defined by the humanitarian imperative, retains independence from the Mission as well as the development actors, the Head of Integrated Office ensures that areas of cooperation (especially on the triple Nexus issues) are clearly defined and managed.

Equally importantly, a more integrated structure covering the DSRSG/RC/HC responsibilities would allow for this office to perform an “enabler and integrator role” for the HCT/UNCT as well as cooperation bodies between UNMISS and the

development/humanitarian stakeholders. In Somalia that role extended inter alia to aid coordination, risk management, Trust Fund Management and security support.

It is proposed that the RC/HC submits a multi-year project proposal to the donor community on an Integrated Office with clear deliverables formulated inter alia around:

- Service orientation and convening power towards the various international and national stakeholders in the humanitarian, peace building and development community
- An integrated solutions-driven approach around specific aspects of the Nexus
- An enabling role towards collective interfaces with Government (at national and sub-national levels) on aid and development coordination related issues
- Optimizing in-country capacities amongst humanitarian, development and peace actors resulting in improved joint innovative programming
- A coordinated, comprehensive and mutually reinforcing risk analysis, management and mitigation capability
- Management of collective and catalytic funding mechanisms (including Trust Funds)

ANNEX 3: NOTE ON RISK MANAGEMENT UNIT

Currently, risk management in South Sudan is coordinated by an informal “coalition” of actors.

Whereas the participating agencies inside the coalition (and many other external stakeholders) acknowledge the importance and usefulness of risk analysis and risk management in a volatile and fragile context like South Sudan, the capability is not fully institutionalized as a collective platform that aims to create a “common narrative”. Instead, various stakeholders appear to start operational engagement from diverging angles (e.g., “pockets of hope” or “development ready states”). Common ground on risk analysis and -management would not only result in a common narrative but could be utilized as a basis for joint programming, implementation and M&E.

Risk management moreover underpins localization and decentralization, particularly if one takes the States as the “angle of engagement” and support ICCG’s below Juba level in creating an “area-based” assessment of risks, opportunities and potential. It provides relevant data and analysis that will facilitate the choice of and cooperation with national entities (whether these are governmental, non-governmental or private sector). It will moreover help humanitarian actors in prioritizing interventions where the populations in greatest needs and at greatest risk would benefit.

Collective risk analysis, mitigation and management can lead to enhanced effectiveness in programmatic design and may therefore improve donor confidence and access to additional funding (such as PBF and other high-risk-high-yield mechanisms).

The World Bank and IMF are currently engaged in more direct investment in Government institutions and mechanisms through their staff monitored program and the IDA-19 window. In this respect, both have shown significant risk appetite. It would be important for the UN and NGO community to not stand by “and see it fail or succeed” but rather become an active part of a broader risk management community. They simply cannot continue to disregard the need for enhanced national ownership and the need to enhance accountability by national entities in the delivery of basic services in South Sudan.

Recommendations:

1. Whereas overlap or competition (and certainly agencies should retain their individual risk analysts) should be avoided, it would be highly beneficial if the RC/HC would take on the role of overseeing, coordinating and tasking a collective risk management platform as the triple hatted role spans all elements of the “nexus equation.” As part of the project proposal towards an “integrated office”, capacity and resources should be put at the RC/HC’s disposal that allow her to coordinate and catalyze risk management as a “common good” for all humanitarian, development and peace actors.
2. Along the line of the integrated office in Somalia, risk management can be developed in a multi-dimensional tool that includes fiduciary, political, security and reputation risk assessment and analysis. It may be advisable to ask the Head of the RMU in Somalia to undertake a mission to South Sudan and help design the modalities for a joint risk platform (as has been done for a number of other countries already).
3. The collective risk management capability in the Integrated Office will work closely with UNDSS and the NGO Security Network to include security risks as part of its overall and comprehensive approach.

ANNEX 4: LIST OF STATEMENTS FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY

LEADERSHIP

1. The HCT makes informed, timely and strategic decisions.
2. The HCT engages effectively with the Government to support the humanitarian response.
3. The HCT is implementing an effective advocacy strategy to address key protection issues based on regular protection monitoring.

COORDINATION

4. The humanitarian community in *[insert field location]* has access to relevant and timely data and analysis in order to prioritize the response.

Effectiveness of the response

5. The coordination architecture in South Sudan enables a rapid humanitarian response.
6. The coordination architecture in South Sudan enables a humanitarian response on an adequate scale.
7. The coordination architecture in South Sudan enables a humanitarian response of adequate quality.

Coordination with subnational level

8. Coordination structures at the national and subnational level work together effectively to deliver a strong humanitarian response.
9. Coordination structures at the national and subnational level have clearly-defined and complementary roles and responsibilities.
10. *[Juba workshops:]* The ICCGs at field level are empowered and effective.
[Field-level workshops:] The ICCG in *[insert field location]* is empowered and effective.
11. The HCT and sub-national coordination bodies implement the Saving Lives Together Framework effectively.
12. The HCT and sub-national coordination bodies have effective strategies to respond to security threats to humanitarian actors.
13. The HCT and sub-national coordination bodies have strategies to engage with the government on bureaucratic impediments and aid worker safety.
14. The response in South Sudan capitalizes on the use of common pipelines and humanitarian hubs.

Engagement of the Cluster Lead Agencies

15. Cluster Lead Agencies (UN and NGO) effectively represent and support their clusters.

-
16. Cluster Lead Agencies (UN and NGO) provide appropriate resources to the sector/cluster functioning (dedicated sector/cluster coordinators, IMOs etc).

Nexus

17. The HCT and UNCT have a shared analysis and jointly articulated “collective outcomes,” or humanitarian-development-peace priority areas.
18. The HCT works towards collective outcomes with development actors and UNMISS while ensuring a principled humanitarian response.

Preparedness

19. The HCT has Preparedness Plans that are effective and coordinated with the authorities at both national and sub-national levels.

Localization

20. National and local NGOs are well integrated into decision-making.
21. National and local NGOs’ ability to respond to humanitarian needs is being fully utilized.
22. The international humanitarian community in South Sudan actively supports national NGOs to access financial resources for their programmes.

ACCOUNTABILITY

23. Joint needs assessments inform the humanitarian response and include the needs of women, men, girls and boys and other vulnerable groups.
24. Affected communities are engaged in all aspects of the humanitarian response, including programme design, assessments, response and monitoring.
25. There is regular communication with affected communities on the delivery of assistance, and the response is regularly adjusted based on their feedback.
26. The HCT has a Centrality of Protection strategy, and is implementing it with positive results for affected people.
27. Addressing Gender-based violence (GBV) is adequately mainstreamed in the response.
28. There are effective mechanisms in place to prevent and report on sexual exploitation and abuse of the affected population by aid workers.

ANNEX 5: REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

The mission report and the HCT action plan are based on the mission’s extensive engagement with humanitarian partners in South Sudan including through self-assessment exercises held in Juba, Malakal, Wau, Bentiu and Bor. 154 participants took part in the self-assessment exercises, of which 35 percent were women. The self-assessment was conducted using the online Mentimeter tool.

Location	# of participants	Female	Male
National ICCG Juba	17	7	10
ICCG Malakal	6	12	18
INGO/NNGO Malakal	1	11	12
ICCG Wau	3	7	10
INGO/NNGO Wau	3	15	18
ICCG Bor	1	17	18
INGO/NNGO Bor	1	16	17
ICCG Bentiu	2	10	12
INGO/NNGO Bentiu	3	9	12
HCT Retreat Juba	8	11	19
TOTAL	154	35	118

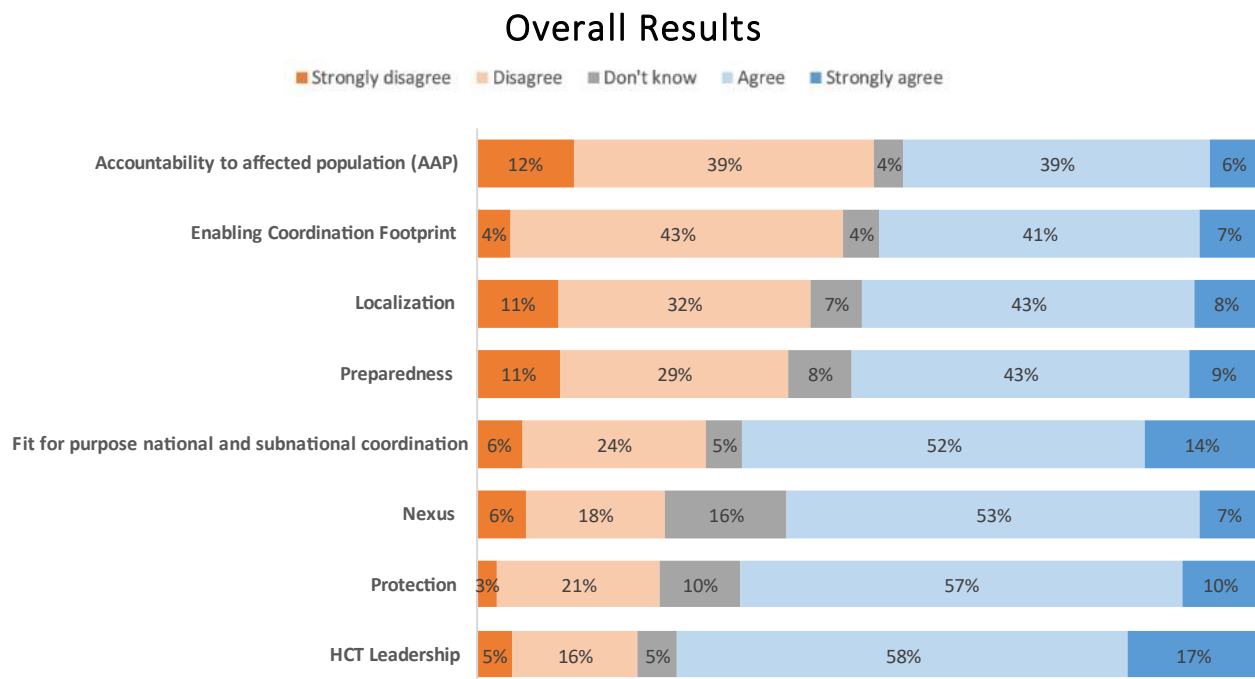
The self-assessment results, displayed below, are condensed and indicative of a larger set of assessments for ease of reference and analysis. A general observation made by team members was that survey results tended to be more positive at sub-national level than at national level. This was the case in all locations and across meetings with ICCGs and INGOs/NNGOs. Moreover, while there were strong linkages with overall findings by the team, highly positive assessments tended to become far more nuanced through post-survey discussions. The mission team found that subsequent small group exercises and plenary discussions (on achievements, challenges and action to address or mitigate challenges) tended to highlight far greater complexity, with significant divergence from survey results.

In terms of the national and sub-national dynamic, field locations indicated disconnect, inadequate attention from capital and a largely top-down approach. It was noted that this could be addressed through empowered sub-national structures and coordination, with further resources invested in devolved leadership. Relations with the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) were characterized as defined by dependence and high expectations, coupled with limited accountability. To remedy the situation, participants called for strengthened strategic engagement by humanitarians to foster and set expectations for GoSS ownership and accountability.

Response was identified as largely reactive and tactical, rather than proactive and strategic. Issues with both quality and scale were raised, along with insufficient focus on the cyclical nature of emergencies. The need for more aggressive and

joined up preparedness and prepositioning was highlighted as urgent, especially in light of recurring floods, but also in anticipation of other events that drive up humanitarian needs. At the cluster level, there was general satisfaction with joint assessments, but it was evident that this did not translate into the implementation phase through scalable, complementary and meaningful joint programming. Clusters are generally considered under-resourced with competition for resources among actors. Insecurity and bureaucratic and administrative impediments were highlighted as significant operational constraints, with participants calling for stronger emphasis on establishing an enabling security environment and reinforcement of “do no harm”. Relations with national and local partners were characterized as extractive and transactional in nature, with such organizations being generally under-utilized and left out of decision-making. Similarly, areas of accountability – Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Centrality of Protection, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) – tended to be considered under-resourced, not widely understood and/ or implemented, with a strong need for collective attention and investment.³

Overall, with the cumulative responses from all cohorts, the most negative statements pertained to Accountability to affected populations, the Coordination footprint, Localization and Preparedness.



³ To note that the assessment of performance on CoP, GBV and PSEA tended to be more positive at Juba ICCG level, than at sub-national level.

On **Accountability**, there were particularly negative views on whether affected communities are engaged in the humanitarian response.

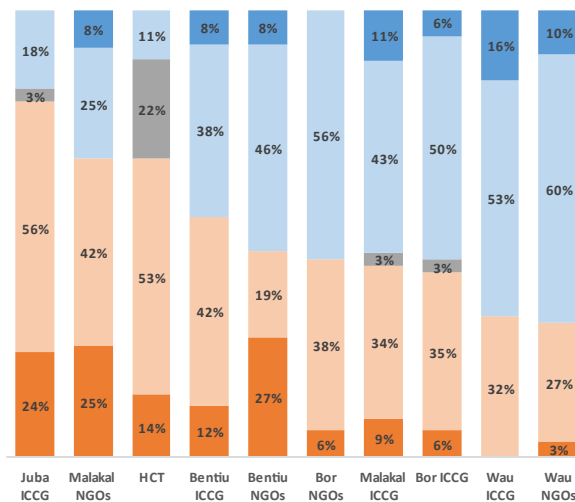
Accountability to affected populations(AAP)

Strongly disagree Disagree Don't know Agree Strongly agree

Results by Statement



Results by Group

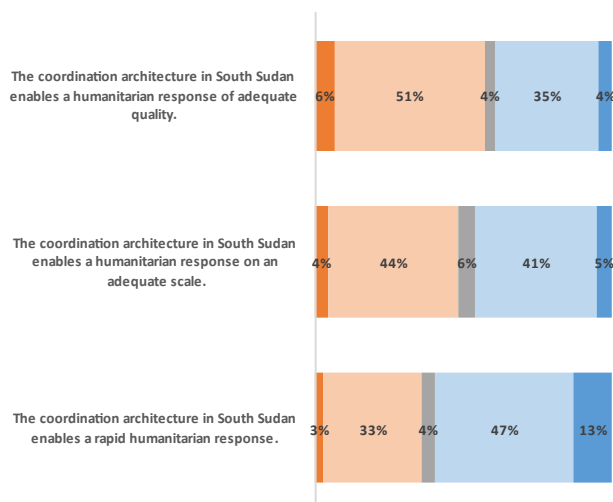


Coordination: More than half of participants said that the coordination architecture in South Sudan enables a response of adequate quality, with a high number of negative answers on scale and – to a lesser extent – rapidity.

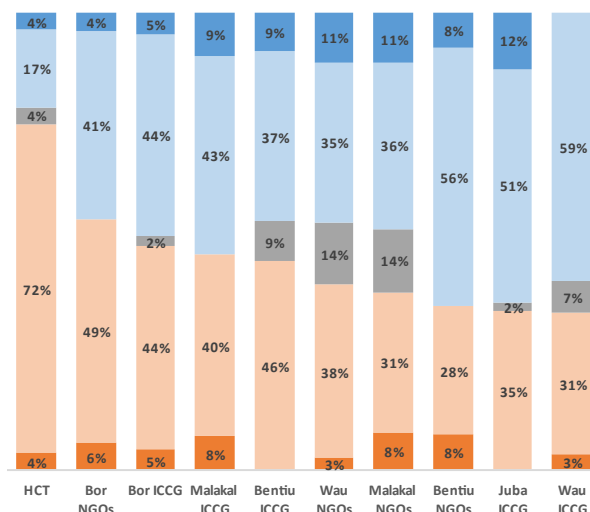
Enabling Coordination Footprint

Strongly disagree Disagree Don't know Agree Strongly agree

Results by Statement

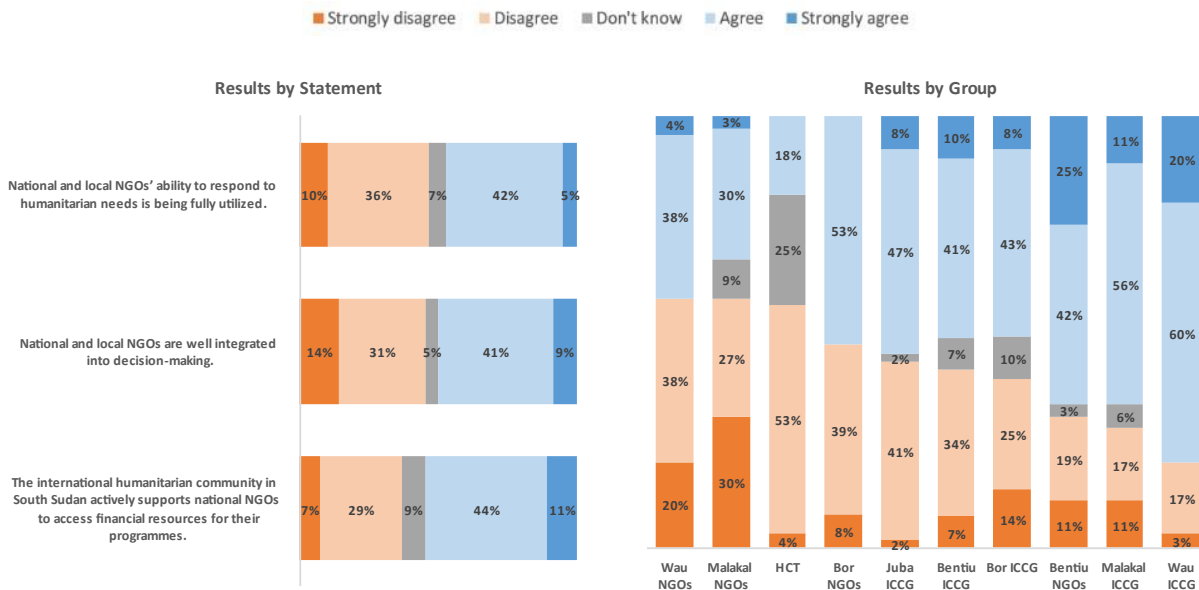


Results by Group



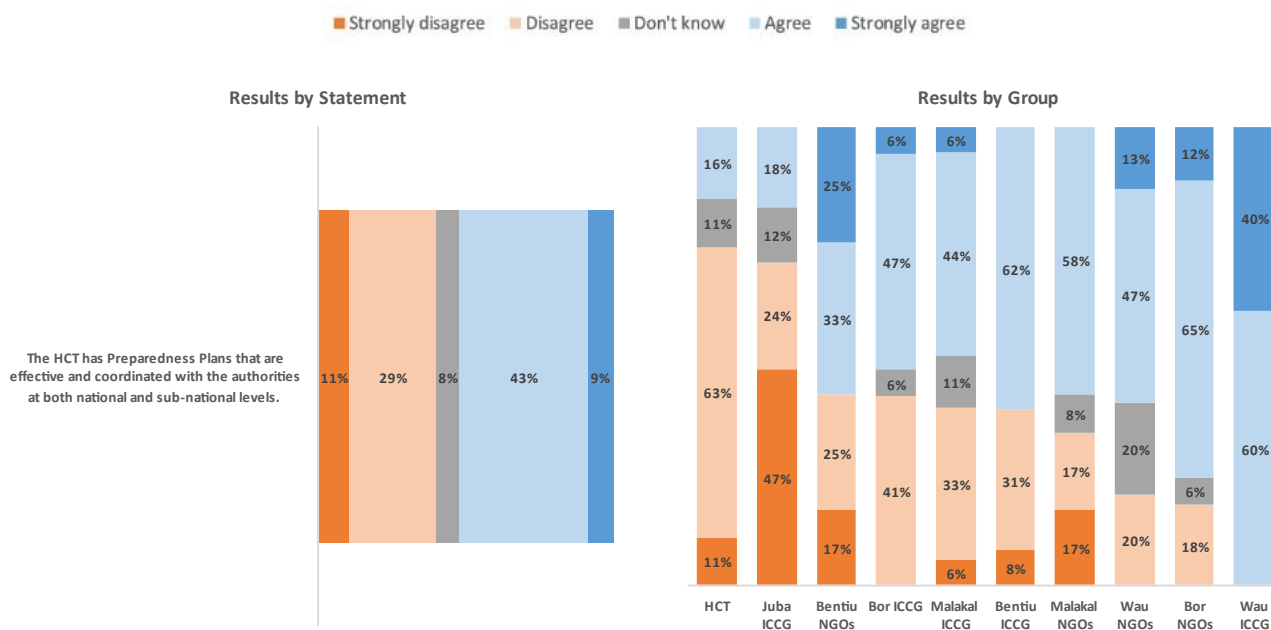
Localization: A large number of respondents felt that NNGOs’ abilities are not being fully utilized, and that they are insufficiently integrated into decision making.

Localization



Preparedness: Some 40% of respondents felt that there is a lack of effective and coordinated preparedness plans, with a relatively high rate (8%) of “Don’t knows”.

Preparedness



ANNEX 6: MISSION PROGRAMME

	TEAM A	TEAM B
MON 28 FEB	JUBA - Initial in-briefings and meetings (DSRSG UNMISS, DSS, Government, World Bank)	
TUES 1 MARCH	JUBA bilaterals (donors, UNMISS, NNGOs, INGOs)	JUBA ICCG workshop Bilaterals with MSF, PSEA Network, FAO
WED 2 MARCH	MALAKAL ICCG workshop	BOR ICCG workshop
THU 3 MARCH	MALAKAL field visit MALAKAL NGO workshop	BOR field visit BOR NGO workshop
FRI 4 MARCH	JUBA meeting with conflict analysts	
SAT-SUN	Bilateral meeting with UNDP; group debriefs and analysis	
MON 7 MARCH	WAU ICCG workshop	BENTIU ICCG workshop
TUE 8 MARCH	WAU NGO workshop WAU field visit	BENTIU field visit BENTIU NGO workshop
WED 9 MARCH	WAU meetings with youth representatives	BENTIU meetings with youth representatives
THU 10 MARCH	JUBA Bilateral meetings Preparation of HCT Retreat	
FRI 11 MARCH	HCT Retreat	